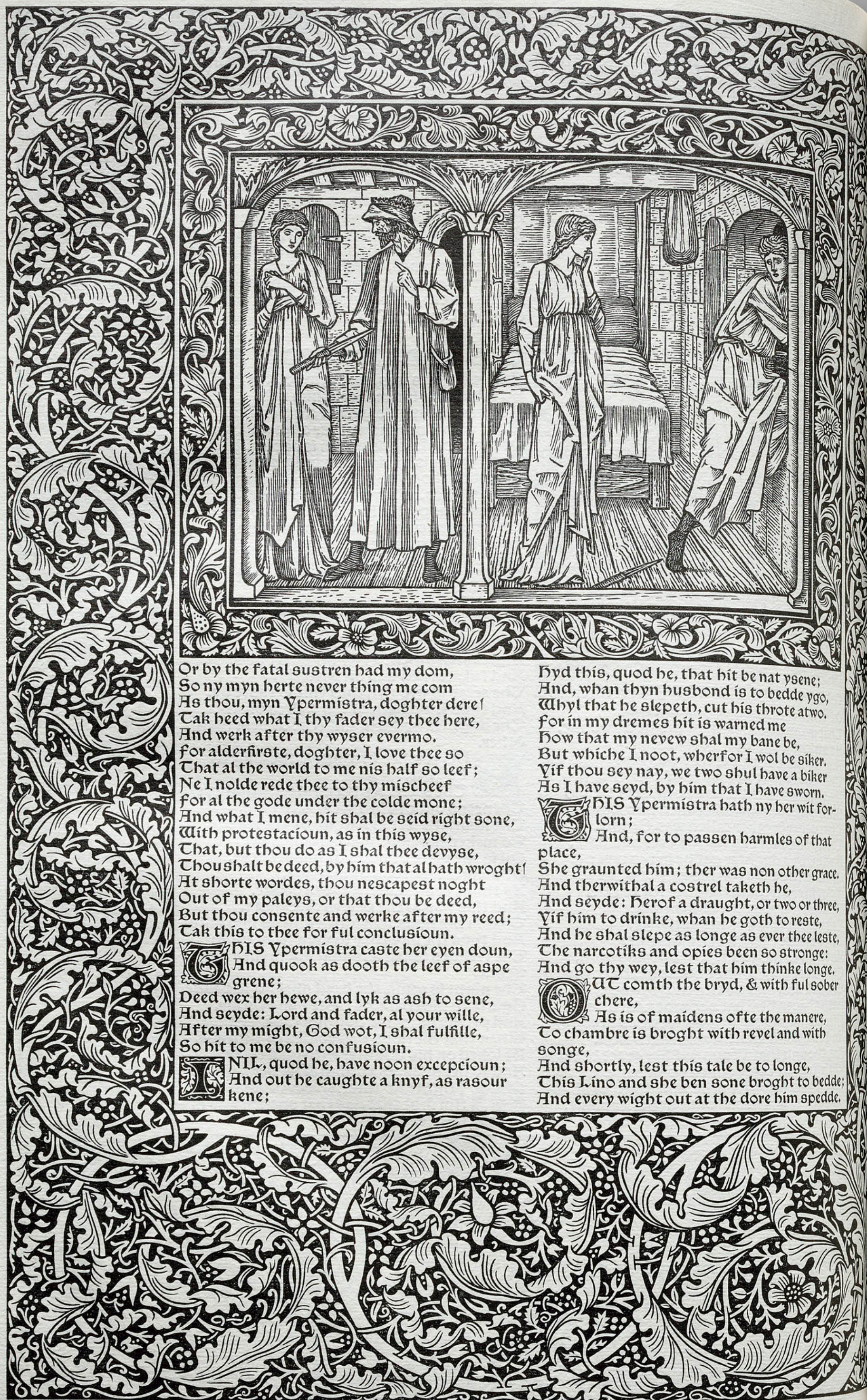




Or by the fatal gustren had my dom,
So ny myn herte never thing me com
As thou, myn Ypermistra, doghter dere!
Tak heed what I thy fader sey thee here,
And werk after thy wyser evermo,
for alderfirste, doghter, I love thee so
That al the world to me nis half so leef;
Ne I nolde rede thee to thy mischeef
for al the gode under the colde mone;
And what I mene, hit shal be seid right sone,
With protestacioun, as in this wyse,
That, but thou do as I shal thee devyse,
Thoushalt be deed, by him that al hath wroght!
At shorte wordes, thou nescapest noght
Out of my paleys, or that thou be deed,
But thou consente and werke after my reed;
Tak this to thee for ful conclusioun.

THIS Ypermistra caste her eyen down,
And quook as dooth the leef of aspe
grene;

Deed wex her hewe, and lyk as ash to sene,
And seyde: Lord and fader, al your wille,
After my might, God wot, I shal fulfille,
So hit to me be no confusioun.

NIL, quod he, have noon excepcioun;
And out he caughte a knyf, as rasour
kene;

Hyd this, quod he, that hit be nat ysene;
And, whan thyn husbond is to bedde ygo,
Whyl that he slepeth, cut his throte atwo,
for in my dremes hit is warned me
How that my newew shal my bane be,
But whiche I noot, wherfor I wol be siker.
Yif thou sey nay, we two shul have a biker
As I have seyde, by him that I have sworn.

THIS Ypermistra hath ny her wit for-
lorn;
And, for to passen harmles of that
place,

She graunted him; ther was non other grace.
And therwithal a costrel taketh he,
And seyde: Herof a draught, or two or three,
Yif him to drinke, whan he goth to reste,
And he shal slepe as longe as ever thee leste,
The narcotiks and opies been so stronge;

And go thy wey, lest that him thinke longe.

AT comth the bryd, & with ful sober
chere,

As is of maidens ofte the manere,
To chambre is broght with revel and with
songe,
And shortly, lest this tale be to longe,
This Lino and she ben sone broght to bedde;
And every wight out at the dore him spedde.

THE night is wasted, and he fel aslepe;
ful tenderly beginneth she to wepe.
She rist her up, and dredfully she quaketh,
As doth the braunche that Zephirus shaketh,
And hush were alle in Argon that citee.
As cold as any frost now wexeth she;
For pite by the herte her streyneth so,
And dreed of deeth doth her so moche wo,
That thryes down she fil in swiche a were.
She rist her up, and stakereth heer and there,
And on her handes faste loketh she.
Alas! and shul my handes bloody be?
I am a maid, and, as by my nature,
And by my semblant and by my vesture,
Myn handes been nat shapen for a knyf,
As for to reve no man fro his lyf.
What devil have I with the knyf to do?
And shal I have my throte corve atwo?
Than shal I blede, alas! and me beshende;
And nedes cost this thing mot have an ende;
Or he or I mot nedes lese our lyf.
Now certes, quod she, sin I am his wyf,
And bath my feith, yit is it bet for me
for to be deed in wyfly honestee

Than be a traitour living in my shame.
Be as be may, for earnest or for game,
He shal awake, and ryse and go his way
Out at this goter, or that hit be day!
And weep ful tenderly upon his face,
And in her armes gan him to embrace,
And him she roggeth and awaketh softe;
And at the window leep he fro the lofte
Whan she hath warned him, and doon him
bote.

THIS Lino swifte was, and light of fote,
And from his wyf he ran a ful good pas.
This sely woman is so wayk, alas!
And helples so, that, or that she fer wente,
Her cruel fader dide her for to hente.
Alas! Lino! why art thou so unkinde?
Why ne haddest thou remembered in thy minde
To taken her, and lad her forth with thee?
for, whan she saw that goon away was he,
And that she mighte nat so faste go,
Ne folwen him, she sette her down right tho,
Til she was caught and fettered in prisoun.
This tale is seid for this conclusioun....
Unfinished.

The
Legend of
Goode
Wimmen